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Police Intelligence Records Here Are Purged of a Million Names

By DAVID BURNHAM

The names of more than one million people and organizations have been purged from the intelligence files of the Police Department, Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy announced yesterday.

In a departure from the traditional secrecy that has been maintained about police intelligence activities, Mr. Murphy disclosed the removal of what he said was about 80 per cent of the names in the files concerning "public security matters."

He also said he had developed new guidelines aimed at tightening controls over the collection and dissemination of intelligence.

Although Mr. Murphy said the purging of the files and the development of the guidelines was a self-initiated effort begun in November, 1970, a suit pending in Federal Court alleges the department's intelligence activities have been "overbroad and unconstitutional." The suit asks that existing files and dossiers be opened for inspection by the complainants.

The suit was filed May 18, 1971, by a group of political activists including Abbie Hoffman, the Yippie leader and a defendant in the "Chicago 7" conspiracy case.

The purge of the files, the Commissioner told newsmen at headquarters, 240 Centre Street, has resulted so far in the names of persons in the intelligence index being reduced to 240,000 from 1,220,000—a deletion of 980,000 names. Organizations listed in the index have been reduced to 25,000 from 125,000.

Mr. Murphy also said intelligence folders on individual persons had been reduced to 2,500 from 3,500 while intelligence folders on suspect organizations had dropped to 200 from 1,500.

Both the index cards and the folders have been "definitely destroyed," a police spokesman said.

Mr. Murphy also said he did not agree with the recent assessment of Representative Edward I. Koch, Democrat-Liberal,

that the training last September of 14 New York policemen by the Central Intelligence Agency was illegal.

A Fine Line

The Commissioner insisted the police had a legitimate and absolute need to gather intelligence.

"However, there is always the possibility," he said, "that some police practices may infringe on individual rights. The line between public and private interest is so fine that any system which is required to collect information about individuals and groups is susceptible to such infringement."

"This department, at its own initiative, has introduced effective self-corrective measures and will continue on the course of self-examination and self-improvement. We are committed to the goals of preserving public safety and providing all possible safeguards for the rights of individual citizens."

Mr. Murphy said that as far as he knew, the New York Police Department was the first local or state police agency in the United States to develop written guidelines to control the gathering, processing and dissemination of intelligence information.

Leading Points

He cited the following points as the highlights of the new guidelines:

¶ In all intelligence matters outside of organized crime, investigations can be initiated only with the specific approval of the Police Commissioner, the First Deputy Police Commissioner, the Chief of Inspectional Services or the commanding officer of the Intelligence Division.

¶ Undercover policemen—who in the past have infiltrated such groups as the Black Pan-

thers, the Students for a Democratic Society and the American Nazi Party—"must in each instance be separately approved by the First Deputy Commissioner or his special designee."

¶ The political beliefs or preferences of any potential "object of an investigation shall not, of itself, be justification for the initiation of an investigation."

¶ Dissemination of information to other governmental agencies shall be authorized only by the commander of the Intelligence Division in response to written requests from such agencies.

Retained Names

Asked what kinds of names were retained in the files, First Deputy Commissioner William H. T. Smith said such decisions were based on specific analysis of whether the person or organization might pose "an immediate or future problem to the Police Department."

Mr. Smith said a police problem could include an organization that might hold a rally causing traffic tie-ups or an organization or person who might be considering specific criminal activity, such as bombing a consulate.

The official said the names that had been deleted included old or out-of-date matters, references that were so cryptic as to be useless and information from unreliable sources.

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